DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 259 561 FL 015 123

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TITLE Using Videotape in Teacher/Tutor Training Courses.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (19th, New York, NY, April 8-14, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Instruction; Classroom Techniques; *Curriculum Development; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Language Teachers; Program Descriptions; Second Language Instruction; Teaching Methods; *Tutors; *Videotape Recordings; Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS Canada

ABSTRACT

The curriculum development process for two Canadian projects to train inexperienced and untrained language instructors is described. An Alberta program trains volunteer tutors of English as a second language, and a British Columbia program trains teachers of Canadian heritage languages. Both groups have a limited amount of time for training, and the topics selected for inclusion in the program include: encouragement of respectful, authentic, and mutually interesting instructional conversation between and among language teachers and learners; a theoretical understanding of the nature of learning; and facilitation of language learning through planning learning activities and making and adapting learning materials. Both courses use videotapes of classroom activities in instructional contexts similar to their own but in an unfamiliar language, first without and then with visual aids, to highlight their effectiveness. The two programs use different materials development needs, the tutor training project focusing on the use of real conversations, and the heritage language teacher project concentrating on teacher-developed materials. It is expected that the videotape use will encourage the tutors and teachers to try new techniques and to feel more confident about currently used techiques. (MSE)

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ED259561

Presentation to 19th Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (New York, New York, April 8-14, 1985)

Using Videotape in Teacher/Tutor Training Courses

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Using Videotape in Teacher/Tutor Training Courses

This paper describes curriculum development for the training of two groups of inexperienced and untrained language instructors. In the first case, we are concerned with volunteer tutors who work with English as a second language (ESL) adult students; in the second case, we are concerned with persons who teach children what are called in Canada, 'heritage languages'. We have found fruitful our discussions about the similar and the diverse needs of these language instructors and attempt to report the results of those discussions in this paper. Focus in this paper is mainly upon the content of the curricula we have designed or are designing, but we also discuss the methods of transmitting that content.

Both the volunteer ESL tutors and the heritage language teachers for whom our training programmes are designed lack comprehensive teacher training but they are personally seriously committed to their work with students. Both programmes have a limited amount of time for training. Because of these conditions or constraints, devising appropriate training programs has meant that we have had to identify what we see as the most important and most easily transmissable information for language instructors. That is, we have considered what sorts of things we believe language instructors must know or be aware of, and also considered what can be transmitted relatively quickly and easily.

We begin this paper by describing the contexts in which our training programs operate, showing the conditions under which our trainees are learning new skills. We then describe the content we have decided to include in our training programs and at the same time give descriptions of how we plan to transmit that content.

The Alberta Project

Many limited English proficiency newcomers to Alberta attend regular, provincial government-sponsored English classes, but for those with special needs, such as homebound mothers, the handicapped, the elderly, shiftworkers and/or the very shy, this alternative is not always possible. In response to the perception that not all newcomers were being well-served, some communities have established volunteer ESL tutoring programs and it is estimated that at least 600 to 700 people in Alberta are currently being served by ESL programmes staffed with volunteers. Programmes range from student enrolments of 20 up to 300. Smaller tutoring programmes often are included among other volunteer services provided by agencies which concern themselves with interpretation, translation and crisis intervention.

Providing adequate training and support to volunteers with little training or experience in teaching ESL has been a problem. Some agencies offer some pre-service training for their volunteers; some do not. Some programmes are co-ordinated by persons who have ESL training; some programme organizers, on the other hand, have little more expertise in teaching English than their volunteers. Added to this is the instability of funding for programmes, which affects the job security of trained coordinators. Many agencies and individuals see a well-sequenced and standard approach to training of tutors, not dependent upon the skills of any particular co-ordinator, as an important need. In addition, it has been seen that a successful tutor training programme must be 'self-contained': that is, because at least some of its users live in small Alberta communities where library or other resource materials are not available, a programme must require no other support or resource materials beyond itself.

The Neighbours project, initiated in 1984, is a tutor training programme for such volunteers. It will result in training materials which can be used by agencies and individual tutors all over the province. The training materials (consisting of five modules) are self-contained and are intended to be used in workshop settings (each workshop typically lasting 2-3 hours). Five modules cover the following topics:

1. making contact: the first meeting
2. organization and lesson planning
3. making and adapting materials
4. ESL literacy
5. intercultural communication

Each module includes a videocassette, a tutor handbook and a coordinator handbook. The videotapes illustrate interactions between volunteer tutors and students, various teaching techniques, and other issues of interest in the modules. Users of the modules will include completely untrained tutors who have not yet worked with their students, and tutors who have already spent some time working with students but who have had little or no training before this project became available.

The British Columbia Project

Teachers of heritage languages in Canada work, for the most part, outside the public school system and the teachers for whom this course was designed are employed by other than public school systems. In the province currently there are approximately 10,000 children attending ethnic language schools' (Czabo 1983); that is, children attend classes, after school hours or on weekends, sponsored by ethnic social or religious organizations, to learn languages other than English or French. A recent survey showed that

approximately 770 teachers in British Columbia are working in these ethnic language schools, and a substantial number of them have had no teacher training of any kind and of those who have had some teacher training, most have not been trained as language teachers. At national and provincial conferences and at other forums, such teachers have strongly expressed their need for training programs.

Since children attend heritage language classes outside of regular school hours, and since their performance in these classes has no obvious effect upon their regular school grades and for perhaps a number of other reasons (for example, the fact that some children simply are not interested in learning their heritage language), teachers working in heritage language classes do not always enjoy the enthusiasm and interest of students which may be characteristic of other classrooms. Thus, heritage language teachers see it as important that they be as skilled as they can be, if they are to be successful with their sometimes-unwilling students.

In response to the needs expressed by a provincial organization of heritage language teachers, Simon Fraser University, located in the only large metropolitan area of the province, near Vancouver, will begin offering in May 1985 a course for heritage language teachers. The course will be offered over a period of six weeks, with students meeting with the instructor twice-weekly for four-hour sessions. Some of the teachers who will be taking the course are ineligible (mainly because they would not attain high enough marks on the university entrance English proficiency test) or uninterested in obtaining university course credit for this course. However, some of the teachers are interested and eligible for course credit, so the course has been cross-listed for credit and non-credit. The only requirements for course enrolment were first, sufficient English proficiency to understand the instructor and to

provide rudimentary English translation of asssignments completed in their heritage languages, and second, that for each heritage language represented, there be at least two teachers enrolled, preferably from the same language school. The reasons for this second requirement are made clear later in this paper. Because the time for training is limited, there will not be adequate time for the instructor to observe and advise course participants as they teach their heritage language classes. So that students might experience in some way new or different teaching methods from the ones they presently use, a series of videotapes have been planned to illustrate how various teaching techniques might operate with children, and to stimulate discussion about effective techniques. These videotapes will show both heritage language and French immersion teachers working with classes of children and will demonstrate particularly excellent teaching.

Language Teacher Training

Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (1980) make us aware of the manner in which outcomes from training programmes are importantly linked to the approach of programs. Reviewing more than 200 studies concerning programmes designed for teachers to acquire new teaching skills and strategies (or to fine-tune skills teachers already had), they discover the following approaches in training programs:

1. presentation of theory or description of skill or strategy;
2. modelling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching;
3. practice in simulated and classroom settings;
4. structured and open-ended feedback (provision of information about performance);
5. coaching for application (hands-on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom.

The authors point out that the approaches and kinds of training activities engaged in will determine to some extent the effects of those programs and they find the following levels of impact of the training programs they surveyed:

1. awareness- A training program may make the trainee aware of a certain issue or issues.

2. concepts and organized knowledge- When a training program has had influence at this level, the trainee has mastered intellectual control over the content of the issue.

3. principles and skills- At this level, the trainee has acquired the principles and skills to act in a certain way.

4. application and problem solving- At this level, the trainee not only is aware of an issue, has a conceptual grasp of it and has the skills to act, but also can transfer these to his/her real working situation.

The authors illustrate what levels of impact are observed with different approaches to in-service teacher training. They point out that the most powerful training sequence (one which has impact at the application and problem-solving level) would seem to involve all five of the approaches (including coaching) described above.

For some of the issues which we will discuss in our training programs, impact at the level of awareness will be sufficient, but for other parts of the training program the level of impact must be deeper, so that teachers/tutors will feel comfortable using new skills in their work. We have therefore considered what level of impact will be necessary for particular issues or skills included in our training programs and have tried to design training components so that the approach to certain topics should result in particular kinds of outcomes.

With the tutor training programme, as there will be no contact between the course designer and the volunteers beyond the training package, it will not be possible to provide feedback about the skills tutors are encouraged to attempt to use. With the heritage language teacher course, it will be possible to provide instructor feedback, and coaching' in their own actual teaching situations will be provided by the teachers, for each other. It is for this reason that for enrolment it was required that at least two students from a particular language group attend.

Topics which we consider to be essential for language instructors, as well as topics which should be fairly easily accessible to language instructors, are discussed below. For each, we attempt to describe the manner in which the topic will be addressed, so that probable levels of impact can be surmised.

Topics to be addressed in training programs

Both the tutor training project and the heritage language teacher education course have as their most important goal the encouragement of respectful, authentic and mutually interesting instructional conversations between and among language instructors and language learners. This topic has been labelled "making contact" in the case of the tutor training project, and it will become an important initial (and returned-to) issue in the heritage language teacher course as well. With this topic, focus is placed on the learners' and also the instructors' wants, interests, needs and talents. We hope to develop in tutors and instructors the realization that teaching/learning is a social relationship which must be satisfying, respectful, and interesting enough to both teacher and students that they are interested in continuing the relationship long enough for teaching and

learning to take place. In the case of the ESL tutors, the training materials encourage discussions about both the ESL students' and the tutors' previous education, occupations, life experiences, and families. The tutors are encouraged to find these things out about their student not only because they will find this information helpful for planning teaching/learning experiences, but also because it is that kind of information which will help the tutor and student begin to develop a personal and satisfying human relationship.

The first videotape of the tutor training project, "Making Contact", concerns itself with this issue of the authentic conversation, the personal relationship. The tape opens with statements by a number of ESL students concerning their lives in Canada. One newcomer expresses frustration about his difficulty in making personal contact with Canadians who seem, he believes, to be afraid to interact with second language learners. The interesting and provocative opinions expressed by these people arouse, we hope, curiousity in viewers about the adaptations their students have made to life in Canada and, we also hope, a determination to maintain communications with newcomers, no matter how awkward. The illustration of "the first meeting" between a tutor and a student illustrates some simple ideas for beginning the tutor/student relationship, showing that both parties share information and both are in the process of learning about the other. The additional point made in the videotape is that the interests and needs of the student, revealed in personal conversations, can provide direction in choosing content for language lessons, and that the most engaging content will be topics of interest both to the student and to the instructor. Instructors are reminded that their own personal needs and interests must be taken into account as well; that the most successful tutor-student relationships are ones where the tutor and student are really enjoying their interactions and

where the language being practised focuses on topics of genuine interest to both.

With the heritage language teacher training course, this same issue of creating and maintaining enjoyable human relationships between and among teachers and students is transmitted somewhat differently. In this case, after a class discussion concerning the social relationships of classrooms, course participants will be asked to give information about their own students' wants, interests and needs. If participants cannot give this information from previous interactions with students, they will be asked to discover and report this information, as a course assignment. Questions will concern such topics as: what is the previous linguistic background of your students; are their parents bilingual; do the students have regular opportunities for using their heritage language outside their classroom and where; what sorts of reading material is of major interest to students in English currently; do students have access to heritage language reading material; do teachers' and students' interests overlap in any area; what is the most watched television program of students and what is this program about; how developed are students' small motor skills; are there differences between the boys' and girls' development of those small motor skills; what percentage of your class dislikes learning their heritage language and etcetera. The functions of having participants investigate such questions are to encourage them to develop knowledge and curiousity about their students, to become aware of some of the things their students know, and, one hopes, to provide in this way the basis for teachers and students to continue authentic conversations about topics of some mutual interest.

Shirley Brice Heath (1983) points out how important it is for teachers and students to share in some way a view of the world so that each understands

in some sense what the other's talk counts as' and so that teachers can ask students good' questions, that is, the kind of questions which do not terminate discussion, but which open up communicative channels. We see it as important that heritage language teachers realize the importance of understanding more about the interests, skills and talents of their students.

The fact that teacher and student conversations in classrooms are typically of the form: **teacher question/student response/ teacher evaluation of student response** has been widely documented for a long time. That such an interactional pattern may not be the most facilitative for language learning appears obvious. Encouraging <u>real</u> conversations between and among instructors and students in language classrooms may imply that teachers know enough of what their students know to be able to take part intelligently in conversations centred on the students' interests, but it may also mean some restructuring of the patterns of interactions in heritage language classrooms. In observations of a number of such classrooms, it became obvious to the first author that heritage language teachers rarely set up language activities in which the teacher is not working' the whole group; children rarely interact with each other in their heritage language classrooms, except unofficially'. When the teacher is always a participant in instructional activities, the benefits of having a group of students are not exploited. To encourage heritage language teachers to set up student-directed activities and to see that the social relations among students are important in the teaching/learning process, course participants will be asked to plan an activity in the heritage language where students will learn some personal information (about interests, talents, families, etcetera) about their classmates. Participants will do this after they observe a videotaped demonstration of this sort of activity carried out in a heritage language

classroom. They then will design a similar activity, try it out with their own students and will report back on its success or failure. Participants will analyze these reports, trying to determine what factors were important in the success of a particular activity. In this way, with theoretical presentation of the notion that the language classroom is a social arena for sharing personally significant information, with a videotaped demonstration of a lesson which calls upon students to give personal information, with practice in their own classroom settings and with feedback, it is hoped that not only will participants have acquired a heightened **awareness** of the classroom as a place for pleasurable and meaningful social exchanges, but that they will have developed some **principles and skills** which will allow them to set up effective instructional activities which make use of the richness of social relations the classroom provides.

Building upon the understanding of the teaching/learning process as a social relationship, where teachers and students must find points of contact', points of similarity, if they are to explore productively their differences, the second major issue upon which both programmes focus is a theroretical understanding of the nature of learning. We understand and present learning as an exploration, where the learner starts from the familiar, the shared or the previously-acquired, and moves toward the new. We believe that the learner can only begin that exploration if she feels competent and safe (hence the importance of the first issue) and if she can relate the new information, the new knowledge, either to previously-acquired knowledge or to problems or questions which have personally engaged her. We believe that it is partly the instructor's responsibility to find what of the new information to be presented is related to knowledge the learner already has, and to find ways to show learners that relationship. Learners also have

this responsibility, of course, and we frther believe that learning itself, (seeing a 'new' connection, being able to say, think, do a 'new' thing) is an inherently enjoyable activity, although it, like exploring, requires a certain amount of courage. Trainees in the tutor training program and the heritage language teachers will be asked to reflect upon their own learning, not only of language, but of other subjects and skills as well, and will be asked to identify what sorts of learning activities they find interesting and those they find boring and to speculate about what is the effect on themselves as learners when presented with activities they found boring. We hope that this reflection will stimulate the observation that when a teacher does not take the learner's previous knowledge or experience into account, or when what a teacher presents does not address any real needs of the learners, this is boring (or angry-making, which according to some, may be the same thing!) and that inherently meaningless and repetitive tasks have the same effect. We hope our trainees and students come to believe, as we do, that people in general like learning. We will point out to the heritage language teachers in particular that classroom management or 'discipline' is essentially a matter of trying to find ways to keep students interested and that 'acting-out' students are very probably bored students. ESL tutors will discuss similar sorts of reasons for discernable drops in enthusiasm or commitment among the ESL learners they tutor. We hope that a discussion of individual differences in rates of learning will also proceed naturally from the trainees' or the students' reflections on their own learning. Finally, with regard to this general notion of learning, we want to point out to tutors and the heritage language teachers that the classroom must be a place where the teacher as well as the students are learning, and that a bored teacher will not be an effective teacher.

The final major issue our programs address is the facilitation of language learning and we approach this issue in two ways: first, we address the process of planning learning activities and second, we discuss the making and adapting of learning materials.

The importance of planning is introduced in a very simple way. We see planning as a way teachers can think about their students and their needs and interests as well as their own (the teachers') needs, interests, talents and even philosophies of teaching and learning. Planning allows the teacher to reflect upon what a learner has already mastered, where the learner would like to add to her skills or knowledge, what goals the teacher has for her students and what sorts of activities might most effectively move the learner toward those goals. Planning allows the teacher to reflect upon previous lessons, and to keep note of student reactions to certain activities, and allows her to make sure that the course of language learning has some direction.

We are very much concerned that the tutors and the heritage language teachers see planning as a process and not as a static product: THE LESSON PLAN. For this reason, the ESL tutor vidoetape which will accompany this issue will show a teacher working with a student on one occasion and then will show the teacher orally reflecting upon what has happened, where she would like to move the student, what the student is interested in, what sorts of activities the student prefers and so on. The heritage language teacher videotape will show a teacher working with a class of students and will show her going through the same process as the ESL tutor, but with regard to a group of students. The written "Lesson Plan" itself will be shown to be simply an artefact of this thinking process and will therefore, not be accorded that much importance. Many of the ESL tutors and heritage language teachers are intimidated by educational jargon and they do not need to produce

written plans with behavioural objectives well articulated in Standard Educationese. What they do need to do is think about their students and they need some structure so as to consider the various factors impinging on the success or worth of particular educational activities. Therefore, after viewing part of the videotape where a student or a class has been portrayed, and where a tutor or teacher has reflected upon her student(s), the ESL tutors and heritage language teachers will be asked to make some speculative decisions about what this tutor or teacher should do in the next class, and in the next few classes. Reasons for decisions will be elicited and simple written plans will be made. Then, the videotape viewing will continue showing what the tutor or teacher actually did decide to do with her student(s): the tutor or teacher will explain what she has decided to do, show how she notes this in writing and will perform the lesson. Viewers will be asked to observe, evaluate and compare the videotape simulation with their own personal plans.

The activities we have outlined up to now for both the tutor training course and the heritage language teacher training course with regard to planning can be seen as incorporating the presentation, modelling and simulated practice approaches. In the heritage language course, an instructor is available to lead discussions giving participants feedback about their simulations. As we do not see planning as a classroom performance skill, having students observe each other in classrooms does not seem to address the issue of coaching for application with regard to planning. Instead, the heritage language teachers will be asked to produce simple written lesson plans and they will be asked, in effect, to show their work: i.e. they will be asked to justify the instructional decisions they have made on the basis of taking into account student and teacher needs. These plans will be evaluated

by the course instructor on the basis not so much of the clarity with which objectives are articulated, or activities outlined, but more on the basis of the demonstrated reflection about the students which has gone on.

The last issue we discuss in this paper concerns the facilitating of language learning through the use of commercial and teacher-constructed materials. The focus with this issue is again taking the needs, interests and previous knowledge of the learner into account when selecting or creating teaching materials.

The videotapes for both the tutor training and the heritage language teacher training course will show a lesson taught in a language we suspect it is unlikely any of the course participants will know, that is, a North West Coast Native Indian language. The lesson will be taught first without visual aides and subsequently, with pictures. The fact that visual aides increase the comprehensibility of unfamiliar language and that visuals pique and maintain the interest of students will be demonstrated. Because we believe that the age of students is crucial in deciding the appropriateness of certain materials, we see the tutor training project and the heritage language teacher training course to have quite distinct needs in terms of discussion of materials development. We discuss them separately below.

With the tutor training project, we hope especially to emphasize the use of realia: tickets, schedules, newspaper advertisements, application forms, etcetera. These materials should engage the interest of students if they represent materials with which the students really have to interact in their lives. Tutor-trainees will be reminded again that the authentic needs and interests of the students must be taken into account: it will not be of benefit, for example, to teach job application form filling-out to someone whose profession will require them to submit personally-constructed resumes in

their job search. The videotapes will show a tutor assembling and collecting real materials for use with individual students with varying needs. The tutor will discuss in general where such materials can usually be obtained.

The heritage language teacher training course videotape will show how teacher-constructed materials can hold the interest of children through the demonstration of a French immersion kindergarten teachers doing opening exercises with her class. Here, relatively unexciting language material is covered in a way which is even quite engaging for adult vieweres, and viewers can readily see why the students' attention is engaged. The videotape will also show a variety of other types of teacher- and student-constructed materials and will give instructions on where to find/how to construct these materials. The heritage language teachers will view work with puppets in a heritage language classroom and will be given instructions concerning the construction of simple puppets. They will be shown how to operate and how to use tape-recorders, telephone prompters, "Language Masters", films, filmstrips, slides and so on. Realia in the form of materials coming either from the home country or from, for example, heritage language publications in Canada will be also demonstrated. The point will be made that because heritage language students, children, rarely have extensive <u>needs</u> for the heritage language in Canada, the materials with which they interact in the classroom must be instrinsically interesting and appropriate for their age/grade level, if they are to be successful.

The videotape we are showing is of a grade one French immersion class where the students have had about 2 and one half months of French. The teacher-made materials are quite simple, but they and the teacher's purposeful manner make for, we believe, a very interesting and compelling lesson.

Conclusion

In both thses teacher training projects, we have decided to use the medium of videotape because it allows us to show our tutors or teacher-trainees particular techniques used in interaction with language learners, a demonstration not typically available either in workshops or in university classes. We also hope that our demonstrations with the videotapes will encourage the tutors and teachers to try new techniques and to feel more confident about techniques they presently use.